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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4376
INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 8042
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 7045
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2642
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 4943
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 8623
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 4555
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 000179

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: CHINESE EMBASSY SEEKS IMPROVED EXCHANGES

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, for reasons 1.4 (b)(d)

11. (C) Following up on a phone conversation between U/S Burns and China's Assistant Foreign Minister, the Chinese DCM in Islamabad shared China's views on the political situation in Islamabad. China's primary foreign policy goals are to promote stability, fight terrorism, increase economic exchanges and support China's growing community of workers in Pakistan. They have a policy of non-interference in Pakistan's domestic affairs, but fully support President Musharraf and are concerned about possible "chaos" that could emerge after the February elections. End Summary.

12. (C) Chinese DCM Yao Jing, accompanied by his secretary Li Ming, met with Polcouns January 11. Jing said he had been instructed to follow up on the December 28 phone call between U/S Burns and Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Li Hu in which the two pledged their respective embassies would have closer ties.

Musharraf "Vital"

13. (C) Jing volunteered the Chinese agenda and their analysis of the political situation. He noted that China had sent a Special Envoy to Pakistan in mid-December who had then shared his views with our Embassy in Beijing. Before Bhutto's assassination, the Chinese believed that Musharraf was completely in control but was facing challenges. They continue to support Musharraf; Jing described him as being "vital" to Pakistan and having the Army's full support. China also believes Musharraf's priorities--which Jing identified as being stability, a smooth transition to democracy, the fight against terror, promotion of moderate Islam, and economic development--are good for Pakistan and good for the international community.

14. (C) Although Bhutto's assassination has weakened Musharraf's party, Jing said the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) party was pleased with the election delay and that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has not created problems by fighting the postponement. However, Jing worried about possible "chaos" after the election because the populace appears split between the PML and the PPP.

15. (C) Jing asked for the USG position on the proposed UN investigation into Bhutto's assassination and for our views on Asif Zardari's leadership. Polcouns said that we did not believe the GOP supported making a formal request to the UN for this investigation. We were pleased that Zardari had appealed for calm following the post-assassination violence

and were carefully following how the PPP would hold together following the shock of losing Benazir Bhutto.

Security Concerns

16. (C) Jing said that China has 5,000 laborers, 3,500 engineers and approximately 1,000 business people in Pakistan. Ensuring their security has become his biggest challenge given the growing incidence of violence and suicide bombings. On big development projects like the Gwadar port, the GOP is providing 7,000 security (nfi) to protect sites and workers. But individual Chinese workers are soft targets who are easily exploited by militants and those who wish to embarrass the GOP. Jing is trying to register Chinese citizens in Pakistan and has established a working group with the Ministry of Interior to increase security.

Frustrations

17. (C) Jing rather candidly described his frustration with trying to expand Pakistan-China development projects when his superiors in Beijing consistently held back. China had withdrawn 500 workers on the Karakoram Highway project but were constrained from issuing travel warnings because of the GOP's sensitivity on this issue. The latest Beijing concerns continue to be security-related; he lamented the effect of media coverage that left the mistaken impression that all of Pakistan was in flames.

BODDE